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THE RENAISSANCE GARDENS OF THE DUBROVNIK AREA, CROATIA

The Mediterranean part of Croatia is known in the field of garden history for the Renaissance gardens of southern Dalmatia, especially in the area around Dubrovnik. In Croatian literature these are classified as 'The Dubrovnik Renaissance garden'. To understand the essence, value, motifs and cultural range of the Dubrovnik Renaissance garden it is necessary to put it into its historical context. Dubrovnik (the Croatian name) or Ragusium (the Roman name) was first mentioned in about 667 as a new medieval settlement. For four and a half centuries, from 1358 to 1808, Dubrovnik existed as a free town and state. From the fifteenth century it was known as the Republic of Dubrovnik. Although it was surrounded by enemies (on the Continent by the south-Slavic states and from the fourteenth century by Turks, and under continual threat by Venice from the sea) Dubrovnik retained its independence thanks to proficient diplomacy with its patrons: the Hungarian-Croatian state (1358–1526), the Turkish Empire (1526–1808), the Roman Pope and the Spanish and Austrian Habsburgs (from the sixteenth century).

The Republic of Dubrovnik was abolished in 1808 after the creation of the Illyrian provinces under the rule of Napoleon. Dubrovnik was a part of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy from 1814 to 1918, and after that it was a part of Yugoslavia until 1991. Today, Dubrovnik is at the very southern end of Croatia. Dubrovnik was most famous and powerful during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It was the main seaborne trade centre for the Balkans and the mediator between the Balkans, Italy and other Mediterranean states. It traded from the Black Sea to London with 180 ships and was one of the most powerful maritime states at the time. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Dubrovnik rested on its laurels, but its power lessened as seaborne trade moved from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. In 1667 there was a catastrophic earthquake; after the destruction the town and many of the villas around it were reconstructed.

The landed gentry and the rich plebeians of Dubrovnik began to build the first villas around Dubrovnik during the fourteenth century. These became a part of the life and history of Dubrovnik. They were not fortified manors because they were defended by the strong town walls. Each villa formed a complex that included a garden and the surrounding landscape and they provided a rural life, delight and rest. The indented coastline, with small protected bays enabled the villas to be built right

on the shore so that they appeared to float on the surface of the sea. This type of villa on the shore was rare or unknown in Italy and the rest of Europe during the sixteenth century. Waterside villas by the canals and lakes around Milan and along the Brenta canal between Venice and Padua were built during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Villas with gardens are mentioned in the works of writers, travel writers, emissaries and cartographers from Dubrovnik and abroad from the fifteenth century onwards. The historian Philip De Diversis wrote one of the oldest descriptions of the Dubrovnik villas with gardens in 1440. In that description he wrote about the Gruški bay with its vineyards, villas and beautiful gardens.¹ The following authors have also written about the villas and gardens: the travel writer Benedetto Rambert from Venice (1530),² the nobleman Giovanni Battista Giustiniano and Anzolo Diedo from Venice (1553),³ the writer of Dubrovnik's history Serafin Razzi (1595),⁴ the French travel writers Nicolas de Nicolai (1551), Philippe du Fresne Canaye (1572) and Jean Palerne (1582),⁵ the French geographer Leon Bordier (1604),⁶ the historian Giovanni Bottero (1618),⁷ the French travel writer Louis de Hayes (1628),⁸ the travel writer Georges Wheler (1689),⁹ the writer and naturalist Alberto Fortis (1781),¹⁰ F. M. Appendini (1803),¹¹ the German writer Ida von Düringsfeld (1857),¹² the French travel writer Charles Yriarte (1878),¹³ and the Italian art historian Michelangelo Muraro (1964, 1980).¹⁴

THE ORIGINS OF THE RENAISSANCE GARDEN OF DUBROVNIK

The Dubrovnik Renaissance garden was a specific type within European garden art during the Renaissance. It was not a copy of the Italian Renaissance garden and it did not develop all at once. It was the result of a fusion of Italian Renaissance ideas with the specific historical, cultural, social and natural characteristics of the Dubrovnik area.

The influence of Italy

The Adriatic Sea, which divides Croatia (Dubrovnik) from Italy has not been an obstacle to cultural and political influences. Dubrovnik's villas resemble the early Renaissance villas around Rome from the end of the fifteenth century. Those villas are known as 'casali' or 'vigne' (Vigna Strozzi and Vigna Sinibaldiat at the Monte Mario, the Pope's hunting residence (Casino) la Magliana).¹⁵ The building of estates along the Brenta canal near Venice from the sixteenth century onwards could not happen without an analogous building in the vicinity of Dubrovnik. Southern Italy, captured by the Normans in the eleventh century had a remarkable influence on the culture, politics and trade of Dubrovnik, particularly with Naples during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. At that time Dubrovnik warships were at war on the side of the Spanish King Philip II against England. The 'Maestri cavesi' went to Dubrovnik from Cave dei Tirreni (the best known were Onoforio di Giordano and Pasco di Napoli) to build waterworks and fountains in its gardens. Dubrovnik merchants transported stone to Apulia, and brought back soil and compost for the gardens. The influence of the Arab gardens of southern Italy and Sicily was obvious in Dubrovnik.

The medieval tradition of gardens in Dubrovnik

The medieval experience of building domestic and monastic gardens preceded the Renaissance gardens of Dubrovnik. The domestic gardens were mostly utilitarian, but

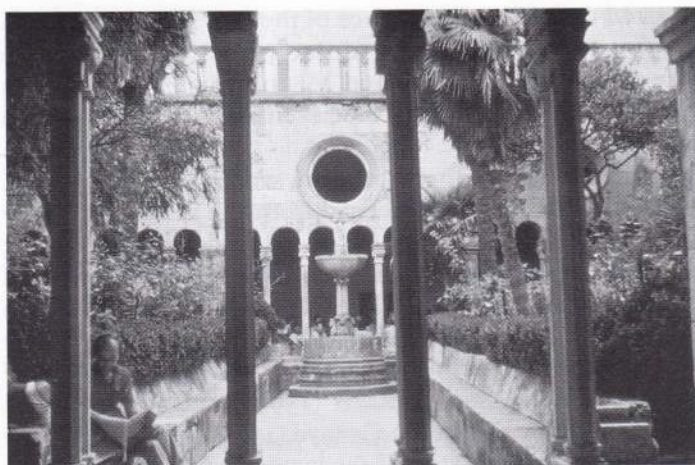


Figure 1. The cloister garden of the Old Town's Franciscan monastery from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries

in historical records of the thirteenth century there were mentions of gardens for enjoyment. Many of the medieval gardens around Dubrovnik were mentioned and described by the writers and travel writers noted above. The cloister garden of the Old Town's Franciscan monastery is one of the best known Dubrovnik monastic gardens of the fourteenth century and it is preserved today as the oldest existing garden of Dubrovnik (Figure 1). The distinctive quality of this garden is a ground-plan which is not of the traditional scheme with two crossed paths and a fountain in the middle; the cloister garden is separated into two parts by a wide path with stone benches on either side. The fountain, which Onofrio di Giordano della Cava built in 1438, is at the end of the path opposite the entrance to the cloister. Gardens were planted with trees, shrubs and plants from different parts of the Mediterranean, especially from southern Italy and Sicily. To be a gardener was a common and well thought of occupation in Dubrovnik and gardening started to be regarded as a craft in the thirteenth century. Gardeners were called 'ortolanus' and 'ortorarius' in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The tradition of country life and agriculture

An accurate history of Dubrovnik and its agriculture is known from the thirteenth century, when the first archives were created. The numerous historical records mention estates with gardens (ortum), vineyards (vinea) and other aspects of the cultivated landscape around the town. The estates in the cultivated land around Dubrovnik became places for enjoyment and rest and the owners were always there at farming time. Chapels (the first dates to 1286) were built in the gardens and vineyards near the town from the thirteenth century onwards and they became a common part of the Renaissance garden. The main idea behind the Dubrovnik Renaissance garden arises from the unity of country life and agriculture. From ancient times the sensibility of the people of Dubrovnik and Dalmatia has been conditioned by the nature of the stony and dry land and by the beautiful Mediterranean landscape which has been appreciated as 'God's gift bringing life'.

The medieval tradition of town planning

The fugitives from the demolished ancient Epidaurus (today Cavtat) who established Dubrovnik at the beginning of the seventh century brought a sense of order and urban structure based on the *cardo* and *decumanus*. The oldest descriptive town plans of Dubrovnik (quoted in the Statute) are from 1272 and 1296. Planned development of the town and of the surrounding area had been deeply rooted and accepted in Dubrovnik centuries before the Renaissance. This approach to development was expressed through the designed and planned geometrical complexes of the buildings and gardens within the landscape.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DUBROVNIK RENAISSANCE GARDEN

The oldest area of the Republic of Dubrovnik, known as the *Astarea* (dating from the seventeenth century), consisted of the area surrounding Dubrovnik town, of the very narrow sea shore from Cavtat in the south to Orašac in the north (about 20 km) and of the Elafit islands (Lokrum, Koločep, Lopud and Šipan). This was where the estates were concentrated due to the vicinity of the old town and the fact that the area was under permanent and absolute possession (Figure 2). Dubrovnik gained some new areas during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: the sea shore on the north up to Ston, the peninsula Pelješac and the islands Lastovo and Mljet. In those areas the number of villas with gardens was remarkably reduced because they were far away from the old town and possession was not permanent and absolute. About three hundred villas with gardens have been registered as the result of researches in the Dubrovnik area. The old Austrian cadastral survey registered about two hundred villas with gardens at the beginning of the nineteenth century in the restricted area of the Dubrovnik Republic, the *Astarea* area. Some seventy Renaissance gardens are preserved today and some twenty of them have remained virtually unchanged. Renaissance villas and gardens were built all over the Dalmatian area but their number is insignificant in comparison with those in the Dubrovnik area. The best known of them are: Hanibal Lucić villa in Hvar, Petar Hektorović fortified villa Tvrđalj in Stari Grad on the Hvar island, Foretić villa in Korčula and Jerolim Kavanjin villa in Sutivan on Brač island.

The villas and gardens of Dubrovnik were for both agricultural use and pleasure. The Palladian villas of the Veneto had the same double purpose but they are distinguished from the Dubrovnik villas by their magnificence. When the primary function of the villa is residential then the garden exists for pleasure, but when the main purpose is agricultural then the garden is also used for that purpose.

The old records, writers and travel writers shed light on cultural life and the enjoyment of the gardens; they record games, music, songs, literary evenings, theatrical performances and important visitors. The archbishop of Dubrovnik, Ludovico Beccadeli, a writer and humanist, often invited his academic friends to his villa on Šipan island. In 1556 he also invited his very good friend Michelangelo Buonarroti, who could not come because of his old age.¹⁶

Period of construction

The majority of villas with gardens were built during the sixteenth century when the building and design was of high quality. Many of the villas are the result of the conversion of or the construction of annexes to older buildings, especially after the

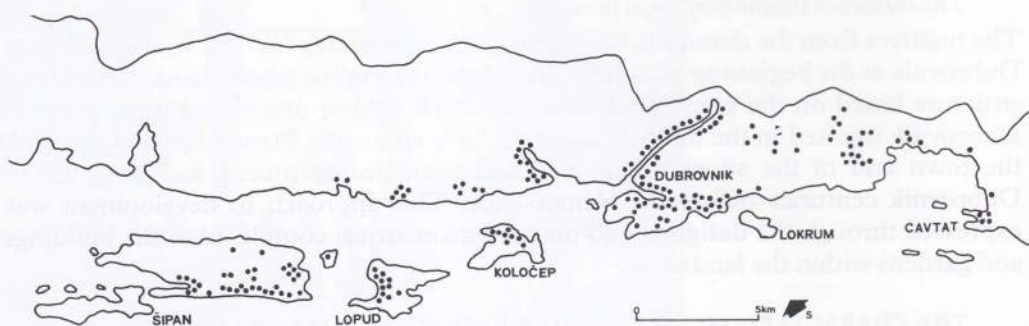


Figure 2. The Dubrovnik area with the locations of Renaissance villas and gardens



Figure 3. The Trsteno garden — a garden with views towards the sea, islands and indented coast

earthquake in 1520. Early writers mentioned many of the estates during the fifteenth century and their writings have been confirmed through archival records. One of the oldest villas with a garden of which we have a record is Juraj Gučetić villa in Gruž, dating from 1441. Knežev Dvor on Šipan (the oldest residential building in Dubrovnik) and Knežev Dvor on Lopud (ruins today) were built in the middle of the fifteenth century. One of the last villas built in the fifteenth century is in Trsteno belonging then to the family Gučetić (Gozze) and it has been preserved.

The villas with early Renaissance and Renaissance gardens in Dubrovnik and Italy appeared at the same time.

Position in the landscape

The very indented coastline, the numerous islands and the configuration of land (plains and slopes) led to a variety of locations of villas and gardens in the landscape.

They are found on the seaside and inland, on the plains and — more often — on the slopes (Figure 3).

The peculiarity of the Dubrovnik gardens is their interaction with the natural and cultivated landscape. The woods and maquis of holm oak, the Carob tree, the Mediterranean cypress and the Aleppo pine are the natural landscape, and the field, the olive grove and vineyard are the cultivated landscape of the Dubrovnik area. Sometimes it is only possible to see the demarcation between the gardens and the surrounding landscape because of fences, a situation which is also found in the gardens of the Far East, China and Japan.

Inscriptions in the gardens

Latin inscriptions on the stone entrances or on the monuments in the gardens confirm the cultural value of the gardens. The oldest known inscription, dated 1286 is carved on a stone wall of the chapel in the vineyard of the Banešić (Beneša) family, which later belonged to the Crijević family, in Gorica on Lapad island. The inscriptions are in Latin and mostly welcome visitors, describing the beauty and pleasure of the gardens.

Here are two:

ESTE PROCVL LIVOR, LITES: AMBITIO, CVRAE, ANTRA, HORTOS, SCOPVLOS PAX COLIT
ATQ. QVIES.

Let envy, quarrels, vanity and worries be far from here. Caves, gardens and cliffs are guarded by tranquillity and peace.

The inscription on the entrance of the Saraka garden in Ploče

VICINIS LAVDOR SED AQUIS ET SOSPITE CELO PLVS PLACEO ET CVLTV SPLENDIDIORIS
HERI HAEC TIBI SVNT HOMINUM VESTIGIA CERTA VIATOR ARS VBI NATVRAM PERFECIT
APTA RVDEM

I am proud of my neighbours, but I am more proud of the water, gentle climate and my owner. Visitor, you can see the traces of human work where good skills improve wild nature.

The inscription in Trsteno dated 1502

Designers and builders

We do not know who the designers and builders of the Dubrovnik Renaissance garden were. It is possible that Italian architects made designs and sent them to Dubrovnik by ship. The builders of the estates were mostly locals and that is confirmed in many documents, including records of contracts for the architectural parts of the gardens such as pergolas, walls and fountains.

The architectural concept and size of the gardens

The Dubrovnik Renaissance garden is an architectural garden: it is constructed of stone and planning is secondary; the ground-plan is geometrical, mostly rectangular, which is one of the main characteristics of the Renaissance garden. Geometrical layout is more accurate on the gentle slopes than on the steep ones, which necessitate the relaxation of geometrical regularity (Figures 4, 5 and 6). The villa and the architectural elements of the garden give shape to an architecturally and functionally complete composition. The villa and garden cannot be observed separately because they are

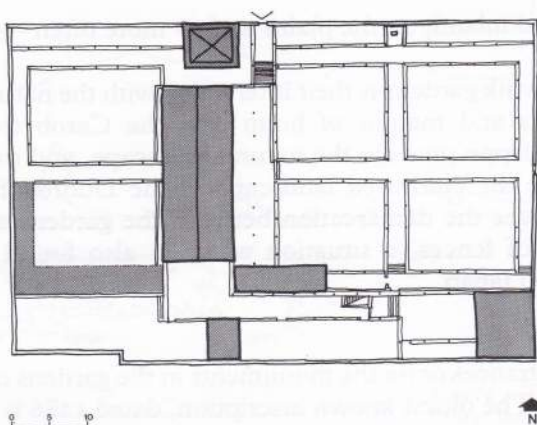


Figure 4. The garden of the Tomo and Vice Skočibuha villa in Suđurađ. After B. Šišić, *Obnova dubrovačkog renesansnog vrta* (Split, 1981), p. 77

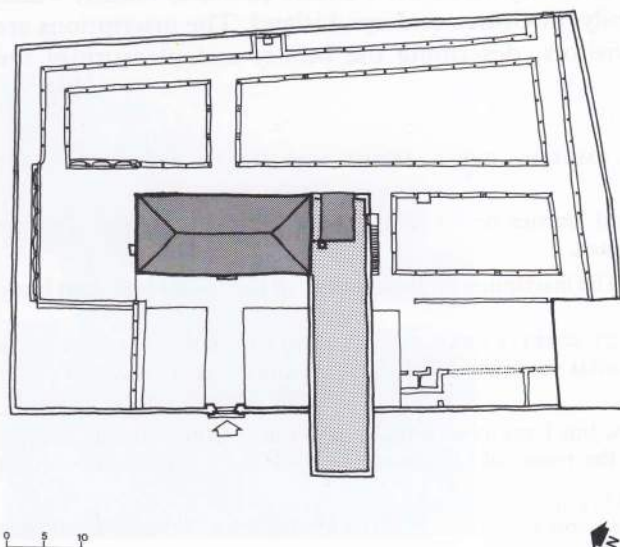


Figure 5. The garden of the Bunić-Gradić villa in Gruž-Dubrovnik. After Nada Grujić, 'Prostori dubrovačke lađanske arhitekture', *Rad Jazu*, 399 (1982), p. 52

entangled with different architectural elements such as stone walls, steps, benches, terraces, belvederes and pergolas.

An axial and symmetrical composition is a predominant characteristic of Italian gardens, but in the Dubrovnik gardens that is not always the rule. One of the best known Dubrovnik Renaissance gardens is the villa garden belonging to the Gučetić family in Trsteno (Figure 7). This estate has a single-axis composition and was built in 1494, which is very early not only for Dubrovnik but for Italy as well. The profound unity of the villa, garden and surrounding landscape is the most important characteristic of the Renaissance garden of Dubrovnik.

The Renaissance garden of Dubrovnik is rather small, mostly about 5,000 square metres (varying from 2,000 square metres to 18,174 square metres as in Trsteno). There are two main reasons: bad natural conditions (stony land and lack of water and soil) and limited space (small state territory and numerous properties).

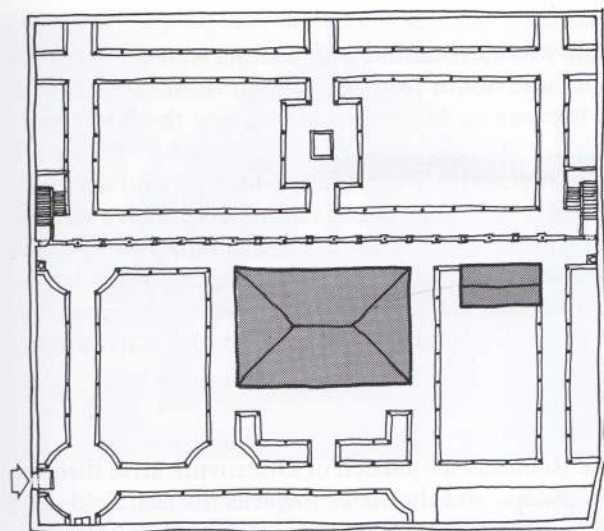


Figure 6. The garden of the Vice Skočibuha villa in Boninovo-Dubrovnik. After N. Grujić, *Ladanjska arhitektura dubrovačkog područja* (Zagreb, 1991), p. 166

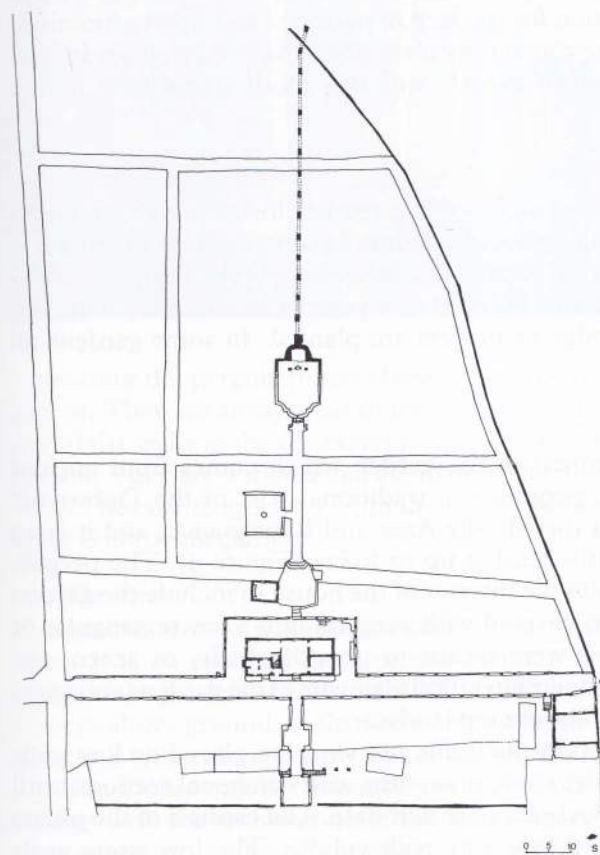


Figure 7. The axial composition of the Gozze garden in Trsteno, dating from 1492

The inward-looking garden

The Renaissance garden of Dubrovnik was surrounded with a stone wall three to four metres high until the sixteenth century and about two metres high from the sixteenth century onwards. The garden walls became an important element of the Dubrovnik landscape because they were built very densely around the old town. The walls enclosed and protected the villa and garden, which was inward-looking and intimate, reminiscent of an Arabian garden-court which Dubrovnik sailors would have seen all over the Mediterranean. The medieval scheme of the 'hortus conclusus' is obvious in those gardens and this scheme was then expressed in the Renaissance garden by the 'giardino segreto'. The entrance to the garden is a door with a stone frame in the garden wall. This gave an opportunity for visual contact with the surrounding landscape.

The outward-looking garden

The outward-looking attributes of the Renaissance garden of Dubrovnik arise through the integration of the surrounding landscape and the views towards the sea, fields and hills. This was made possible by the architectural elements of the garden such as terraces and belvederes and by their sloping terrain. The villa on one side and the view on the other set up the poles of architectural garden composition.

The beautiful and impressive landscape, which is essential in the visual experience of the garden, is the best compensation for the lack of parterres and other attractions which Italian gardens possessed. The characteristic motif of 'the borrowed landscape' is a feature of the Italian Renaissance garden and this motif is essential in the Dubrovnik garden (Figure 3).

Paths in the garden

The paths through the geometrical network of the garden follow its ground-plan precisely. The length of a path is usually about one hundred metres and the width is about three metres. The paths are paved with paving stones, pebbles or bricks. When the path is wider, between the path and the wall of a pergola is 'the arla'. This is a narrow zone of soil where a low hedge or flowers are planted. In some gardens all paths were covered with pergolas.

The pergola

The pergola is an architectural element of the garden which comes from ancient Egyptian times onwards. The vine pergola is a traditional part of the Dubrovnik garden from ancient times, through the Middle Ages and Renaissance, and it is an important architectural element of the garden up to today (Figure 9). The pergola integrates villa and garden and enables the interior of the house to include the garden itself. The garden is divided by paths covered with pergolas into a few rectangular or square compartments. The pergolas were meant to provide shade, to accent the prospect and to direct the view towards architectural elements of the garden (entrance, house, chapel, belvedere) or towards the chosen landscape.

The pergola's pillars, which support the trellis and vine, are placed on low walls along the paths. The pillars are slender stone monoliths with octagonal sections until the sixteenth century and spherical sections after that date. The capitals of the pillars vary from the simple shape to the stylistic one with volutes. The low stone walls



Figure 8. The pavilion-belvedere in the Trsteno garden

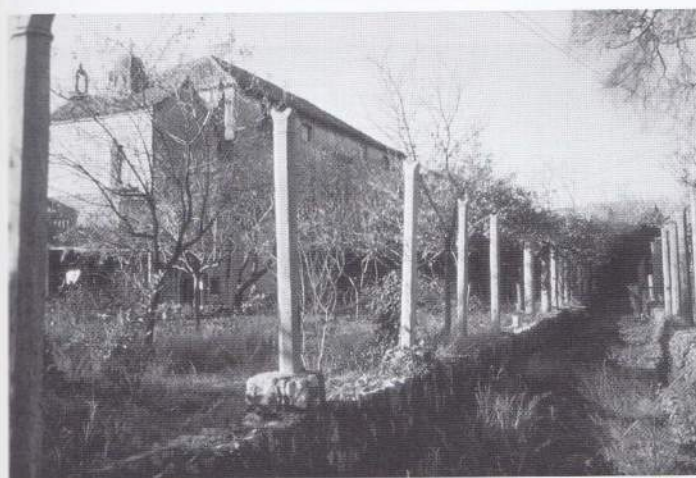


Figure 9. The vine pergola, a characteristic element of the Dubrovnik Renaissance garden

supporting the pergola pillars stress the geometrical, rectangular ground-plan of the garden. They are always part of the composition of Dubrovnik gardens and share the role of the walls in the countryside: they are not only decorative but they also protect the soil. They are a traditional element of the monastic cloister garden of the Middle Ages. The box hedges which rim the Italian gardens are substituted by low stone walls in the Dubrovnik gardens.

The terrace

The garden terrace is a traditional element of the Dubrovnik garden from ancient times. It is an essential architectural element and one of the characteristics of the Renaissance garden of Dubrovnik. The garden, usually on a hillside, has descending terraces above ground level, which help to retain the soil. The position of the garden terraces is either along the boundary wall, in the middle of the garden or both.

The Dubrovnik Renaissance garden has one specific element — a terrace which belongs with the architecture of the villa (Figure 10). The architectural terrace is an open space on the first floor of the villa and it is usually on one side. The terrace

usually ends with a pavilion and sometimes with a chapel as well. The terrace as an extension of the villa is an intimate part of the house; but it is also integrated with the garden. It is paved with stone or brick and is fenced with a low boundary wall with stone benches. Sometimes it has a stone table and well-head if the reservoir is under the terrace. The arsenal, the place for the boats and fishing tackle, is often placed under the terrace when the villas are on the seaside. The arsenal is usually arched on the side facing the sea so that it is possible to enter it by boat. The position of the terrace was carefully selected because the view from the terrace was important; it is often open towards the west.

The terrace belvedere is often an independent element of the garden but it is always integrated into the architectural composition and sometimes connected with the villa by steps and paths. The terrace belvedere is ordinarily on the coastline, the view is to the sea and islands in the surrounding landscape and under it there is an arsenal. It sometimes has a pergola or roof on pillars to provide shade so as to function as a pavilion (Figure 8).

Garden furniture

Garden furniture in the Renaissance garden of Dubrovnik was always made of stone from the island of Korčula. In the garden there were benches, seats, tables, fountains, urns and vases. They were fixed to the ground or wall and were always a stonemason's work.

Benches were built in the boundary wall, on terraces and in belvederes and sometimes along paths. The oldest records of stone benches date from the fourteenth century. Stone tables were oval or octagonal and were placed on terraces or at the end of paths covered with pergolas. Well-heads were ornamented with monolithic stone crowns decorated with reliefs and family coats of arms. Boundary walls were decorated with urns and vases planted with flowers. Those big terracotta urns can be found in gardens even today.

The water in the garden

Water is used sparingly in the Dubrovnik Renaissance garden due to the lack of springs. There were a few villas with aqueducts (as in Trsteno from 1492) and the use of the town waterworks built in 1436 was prohibited. The result was the use of reservoirs filled by rainwater in all gardens to supply water for the plants and fountains.

Fountains were mostly located in niches in walls, with water spouting from the mouth of a mask. One of the best known and biggest fountains in Dubrovnik gardens is the one in the garden of the Gučetić villa in Trsteno (Figure 11). This fountain is a rarity because it is in the garden and not in a niche in a wall. It is connected via an aqueduct with the well. The aqueduct was built in 1492 and it ended with a cave full of sculptures which are not preserved. The current appearance of the fountain, with the sculpture of Neptune and with two nymphs and a dolphin, dates from the eighteenth century.

Several fountains in Dubrovnik gardens date from the Baroque period, such as the small one with nymphs in the garden of the Bozdari-Škaprlenda villa in Rijeka Dubrovačka. In the Renaissance garden of Dubrovnik sculptures were always part of fountains and never stood alone.

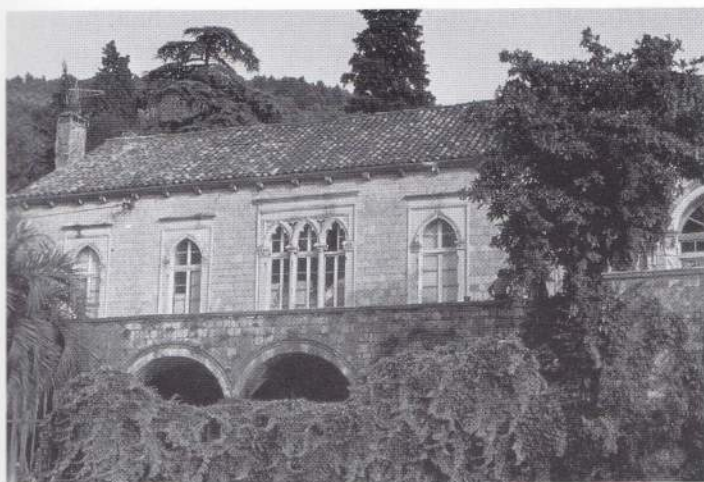


Figure 10. The architectural terrace, a characteristic architectural part of the villa and garden



Figure 11. The Neptune fountain in the Trsteno garden, from the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries; it was renovated in the eighteenth century

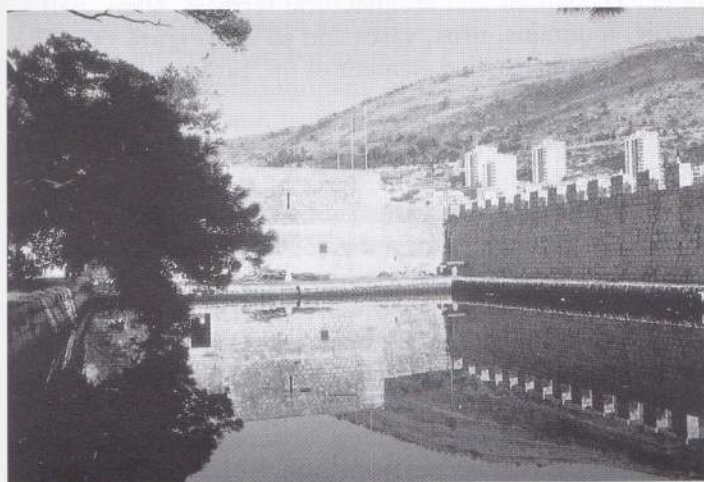


Figure 12. The basin in the garden of the Petar Sorkočević villa in Lapad-Dubrovnik

Water channels, some of them partly or completely preserved, were built into the walls of terraces and conducted rain to reservoirs and irrigated the planted part of gardens.

Many of the villa gardens have a fishpond filled up with sea water and linked by a channel to the sea. The rectangular fishpond played a triple role in the garden: an aesthetic one as a 'water mirror' a useful one as a fish hatchery; and a microclimatic one to cool the air. One of the preserved fishponds is in the garden of the Petar Sorkočević villa on Lapad (Figure 12).

The lack of fresh water was compensated for by the use of sea water which was present symbolically as a fishpond or visually as a view from the belvedere and from the paths to the sea. The introduction of the sea into the garden composition is an important and characteristic element of the design of gardens in Dubrovnik (see Figure 3).

Unity of the useful and the pleasant

The pragmatic and utilitarian concept of the garden has been constant from the Middle Ages, mingled with the desire for pleasure and enjoyment. Due to the barren land and lack of water the gardens were without luxury, splendour and sensual qualities. The Dubrovnik government forbade excessive luxury and the emphasizing of personal wealth through architecture and gardens.

Plants, including the orange tree, lemon tree, lime tree, dog-rose and vine, were one of the best indicators of usefulness and pleasure in the garden. Aromatic herbs were cultivated in gardens from the Middle Ages. Their delightfulness originates from the fragrance and appearance of plants such as myrtle, sweet bay, rosemary, Mediterranean cypress, jasmine, oleander, rose, lily, carnation and violet. Dubrovnik merchants and sailors also brought back different plants, mostly flowers, which were unknown in Dubrovnik.

The four- or five-hundred-year-old Dubrovnik gardens are preserved in spite of degradation and demolition thanks to their stonework. Stone is a gift of nature in the Dubrovnik area and all over the eastern coast of the Adriatic sea. If the Renaissance garden of Dubrovnik had not been built in stone it would not have survived until today. The garden and villa were built as an integral complex. Nearly the whole garden is built in stone: villa fences, garden and architectural terraces, steps, paths, pillars, garden furniture, cisterns, fountains, urns, vases and so on (Figure 13). The plant as an organic material is also a constructive element of the gardens, but as part of the composition and character it is secondary.

THE RENAISSANCE GARDEN OF DUBROVNIK COMPARED WITH THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE GARDEN

If we compare the basic elements of the Dubrovnik garden with the Italian Renaissance garden, which is the ideological and philosophical begetter of Renaissance garden art, we will see that the Dubrovnik garden was a specific achievement within European Renaissance garden history.

Both types originated and evolved during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Dubrovnik Renaissance garden evolved its distinctive style from early Renaissance Italian gardens. Count Gučetić (Gozze) built the garden in Trsteno from 1494 to 1502 with all the main characteristics of the Renaissance garden. Sixteenth-century Italian gardens had no influence on the Dubrovnik garden.

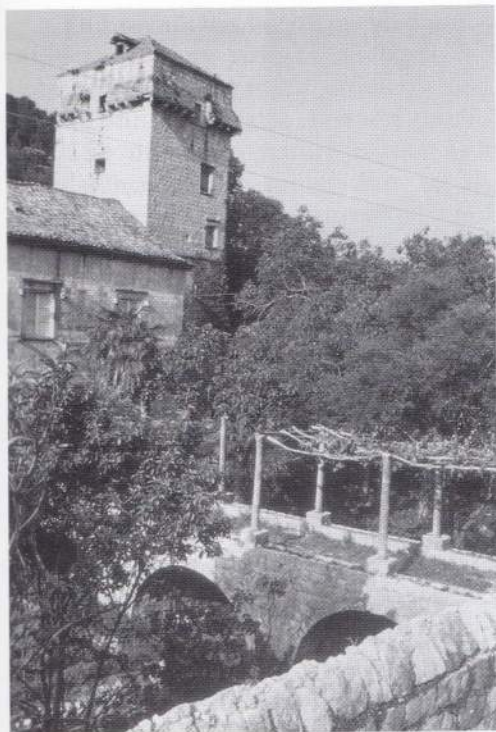


Figure 13. Stone, a basic building and compositional element of the Dubrovnik Renaissance garden

The introvert and extrovert are characteristic of both types: the gardens give as much pleasure as the surrounding countryside. Compared with the Italian garden the contents of the Dubrovnik garden are more modest, but that is compensated for by the beautiful view and prospect towards the sea and the landscape.

The architectural and garden terraces as a connection between the villa and garden are important elements of both types. The specific attributes of the Dubrovnik architectural terraces (the terraces connected with the villa) are the pavilion and chapel. The harmony of villa and garden is emphasized in both architecture and function in both types of garden.

The interrelation between the garden and landscape is common to both gardens and is perhaps predominant in the Dubrovnik garden because the texture of the utilitarian plants and fruit trees within the gardens is very close to the texture of the countryside with its vineyards, orchards and olive groves. The cultural and social life in the garden were very animated and made possible by the mild Mediterranean climate. The Italian and Dubrovnik gardens were used for literary and artistic discussion, reading poetry, plays and family entertainments.

There are several ways in which Dubrovnik gardens differed from those in Italy. Italian gardens of the sixteenth century were two or three times bigger than Dubrovnik gardens. Water is present in Italian gardens in water jokes, large fountains, channels and basins, because Tuscany and Lazio had plenty of water. Axial composition and symmetry are very rare in the Dubrovnik garden, which was adapted to the configuration of the land. Sixteenth-century Italian gardens were always symmetrical. There are no garden parterres, which are made of box in Italian gardens, in Dubrovnik



Figure 14. The Petar Sorkočević garden and villa in Lapad-Dubrovnik

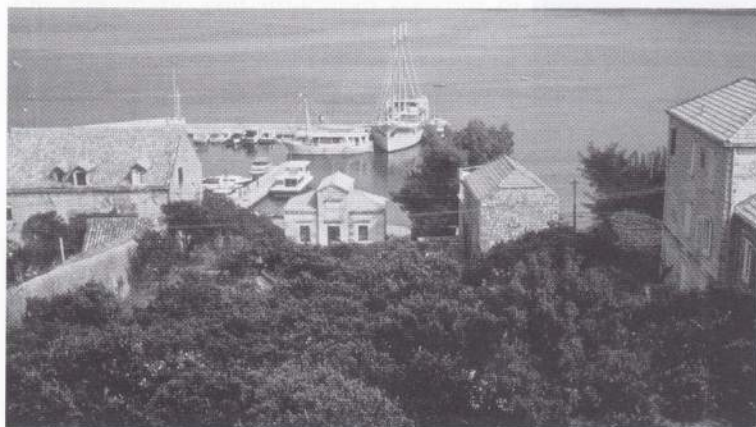


Figure 15. The Gothic-Renaissance ducal palace (Kneževa palača) on Lopud island

gardens, and they have no topiary, an essential part of the Italian garden. The Dubrovnik garden has neither 'giardino segreto', nor sculptures and it is not monochrome.

The Dubrovnik garden is a garden on the seashore, near the sea, almost on it (Figures 14 and 15). The Brenta canals with their villas and gardens bear some resemblance but the canals cannot be compared to the sea. The sea in the Dubrovnik garden is like water jokes, water mirrors or fountains in the sixteenth-century Italian garden. The fishpond in the Dubrovnik garden is filled up with sea water and the sea gives a distinctive quality to the Dubrovnik garden.

Stone is an integral part of both gardens, but the concentration of the stone in the Dubrovnik garden, which is built as an architectural object, is greater. In the Dubrovnik garden the low stone wall is the substitute for the clipped box hedges as a decorative element, a fence and as an edging to the garden beds and paths. The pergola was used in the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance garden in Italy, but it disappeared during the sixteenth century. In the Renaissance garden of Dubrovnik the pergola is one of the main elements, especially because of the beautiful monolithic stone pillars.

Dubrovnik has very good relations with southern Italy and the Arabian-Norman influence is very strong and obvious through the use of flowers, which gives a polychrome quality to its gardens. The channels in the walls of the Dubrovnik garden remind one of the water channels at the Alhambra, Spain.

The utilitarian nature of the Dubrovnik garden reminds us of the French Renaissance garden rather than the Italian Renaissance garden. The Dubrovnik garden resembles Palladian villas, which were the 'casa di campagna', the place for living and farming, in its combination of use and beauty.

THE CONDITION OF THE RENAISSANCE GARDEN OF DUBROVNIK

When we describe the Dubrovnik gardens we unfortunately describe the remains of them. There are about twenty (out of three hundred) preserved but they are in bad condition. The demolition and destruction of the villas and gardens has taken place mainly in the twentieth century, but there was some destruction before. The earthquake in 1520 damaged the gardens of the fifteenth century and the earthquake in 1667 demolished the old town of Dubrovnik and many villas with gardens in the surrounding area. During the twentieth century many villas and gardens have been demolished due to urbanization, building of roads and new architecture. Damage has been caused by unsympathetic use. Some were destroyed during the wars, especially during the last war from 1991 to 1992.

Possibilities for the renovation of historic gardens exist but that will depend on future circumstances. The protection of these monuments has been below standard because the villa has been protected without its surrounding garden. The Gučetić (Gozze) villa and garden in Trsteno is the only site protected as a complex.

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